MINUTES OF THE 83rd MEETING OF STFC COUNCIL HELD ON
21 JANUARY 2018, RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

Attendees

Council Members:

Sir Michael Sterling (Chair)
Brian Bowsher (CEO)
Gill Ball
Gerard Connell
Karen Holford
Richard Kenway
Carole Mundell
David Price
Ian Taylor
Richard Worswick

Apologies:

Tony Ryan, Diana Chaloner, Jordan Nash

In Attendance:

Stephen Axford (Deputy Director Research Council Policy and Science Funding, BEIS)
Sean Freeman (Chair Science Board)
Tim Bestwick (Executive Director Business & Innovation)
Grahame Blair (Executive Director Programmes Directorate)
Bryony Butland (Executive Director Research Infrastructure Programme)
Sharon Cosgrove (Executive Director Strategy, Planning & Communications)
Neil Phimister (Executive Director Finance)
Andrew Taylor (Executive Director National Laboratories)
Zena Davis (Executive Secretary)
Janice Masone (Minute Secretary)
INTRODUCTION

1. WELCOME AND OPENING COMMENTS

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting which was held at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Apologies were received from Tony Ryan, Jordan Nash and Diana Chaloner.

2.2 Council members joined the Chair in offering sincere congratulations to Karen Holford on being awarded a CBE; and Brian Bowsher on being awarded an OBE for their services to UK science in the New Year’s Honours for 2018.

2.3 Council congratulated Professor Mark Thomson on his appointment as Executive Chair of STFC. Mark will formally take up this role on 1st April, however he is scheduled to spend some time shadowing Brian Bowsher over the next couple of months.

2.4 The Chair welcomed Bryony Butland, Executive Director, Research Infrastructure Roadmap programme to her first Council meeting since undertaking the role.

2.5 Council members noted the tabled written report from the most recent meeting of the IAB which will be discussed under item 14 of the agenda.

3. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

3.1 The Chair reminded Council members that they are required to keep the Executive Secretary informed of any changes to their personal register of interests as they arise. The Chair confirmed that there were no potential conflicts of interest for the items that were scheduled for discussion at this meeting.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. CEO REPORT - STFC(2018)01

Brian Bowsher reported on STFC highlights since the last meeting of Council in November 2017.

Staff News

4.1 Council was delighted to hear that Richard Henderson, Nobel prize winner in Chemistry, had acknowledged the contribution from STFC’s Technology Department in his lecture accepting his Nobel prize. Council was also pleased to learn that Wayne Holland (UK ATC) was awarded the 2018 Jackson-Gwilt Medal in Astronomy for his contributions to the evolution of sub-millimetre astronomy and his leadership of SCUBA-2.
UKRI Right to Work Checks

STFC is one of the first Councils to undergo “Right to Work” checks on its entire staff ahead of UKRI taking on the role of employer from April 2018. These checks will take place during the last couple of weeks of January. Executive Board and the Chair recently led the way on this activity and Council members will be undergoing this check at the March meeting.

STFC Pay Award 2017

Brian Bowsher thanked Diana Chaloner (not present) for her hard work in securing a unique pay rise for STEM staff in STFC although it was acknowledged there is still much to do in order to address wage differentials, particularly for mid-level/career staff in the engineering sector.

Neil Phimister and Sharon Cosgrove are in talks with Diamond to understand the discrepancy in pay between their staff and STFC staff in similar roles and which areas are most impacted. This will come to Council via Executive Board.

Watchman (Advanced Instrumentation Testbed)

Following the in-principle commitment to STFC being the UK Project Integrator for WATCHMAN (now called Advanced Instrumentation Testbed, AIT) work will begin to formalise the business case, commitments and governance arrangements. Brian Bowsher will accompany Mark Walport to a follow-on meeting at LLNL in Feb 2018 where AIT will be discussed and an MoU extending collaboration on high performance computing will be signed.

Research Infrastructure Roadmap

The launch event took place at the Royal Society on 22 January and was well attended. The new minister, Sam Gyimah and Mark Walport were present and gave short introductory talks. The project is receiving support from across academia and industry who see the roadmap as vital to the development of a strategic framework to identify funding priorities and emerging opportunities for investment.

Industry Engagement

Brian Bowsher outlined some of the current activity and thinking in this area, which had been flagged as important for development in the Elsy Review and the recent review conducted by former STFC Council member Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow. The development of successful campuses and stronger networks will serve to deliver the “place” agenda more effectively.

International

i. **SKA:** Council was pleased to note that SKA programme is on track and moving toward IGO.

ii. **ESS/ILL:** For both ESS and ILL there are continuing concerns around operational costs. There are meetings for both during Feb 2018, Brian Bowsher will aim to provide an update to Council in
March.

iii. **CERN:** Brian Bowsher attended the 25th anniversary celebration of LHC ‘92 and will host the visit of Patrick Vallance, GCSA designate, to CERN on the 26th of January. It is hoped a date for the UKRI Board to visit will soon be identified.

iv. **USA:** Brian Bowsher is accompanying Mark Walport on a visit to the US West Coast in February 2018, this will include meetings with key stakeholders at LLNL, SLAC, IBM and attendance at the AAAS conference taking place in Austin, Texas.

v. **APPEC:** Brian Bowsher recently attended a successful and informative launch of the APPEC European Astro-particle Physics Roadmap in Brussels and felt it was an excellent example for the UK to use in the development of its own roadmap. Council noted STFC’s significant role in this activity.

4.9 **Senior Leadership Conference**

STFC’s Senior Leadership Conference was attended by over 100 scientific and managerial leaders and was held in Coventry on 30th Nov-1 Dec. The main theme was “Preparing for UKRI” and Sir Mark Walport led one session on the first day which went down very well attendees. Sir Michael Sterling made a speech at the conference dinner which reflected on the many successes over the last 10 years and pointed to a future in safe hands.

5. **BEIS UPDATE - Verbal**

5.1 Stephen Axford gave a brief update on recent activities and changes to his area made in advance of UKRI taking over leadership of the Research Councils.

5.2 Stephen Axford explained that this would likely be his last STFC Council meeting as he would shortly be leaving BEIS to take up a new role at Cambridge. The Chair and all those assembled agreed that he had been an excellent ambassador for BEIS over the years, thanked him for his support and advice, and wished him success in his new role.

6. **FINANCE UPDATE STFC (2018) 02**

6.1 Neil Phimister presented a number of changes confirmed by BEIS to STFC’s 2017/18 Capital and Resource budgets since the November Council meeting. Council discussed and formally approved the updated budgets at Annex C of the Finance Report STFC (2018)02.

6.2 Council approved the UK Facilities provisional capital budgets for 2018/19 and noted the current planning assumption for 2019/20 – the proposed budgets for the UK National Facilities no longer require endorsement from the Large Facilities Implementation Group, as agreed at their last meeting (Dec 2017).

6.3 The Core resource budgets have been updated to include data for PD
transfers to National Labs, including capital transfers. Following an exercise where directors bid for approximately £4m available capital the Executive agreed provisional allocation of the Core capital budget at its December meeting. Council approved the revised Core resource and capital budgets for 2018/19.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

7. i. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - STFC(2018) 03

7.1 Council approved the redacted minutes of the 21st November 2017 meeting for publication on the STFC website.

ii. MATTERS ARISING - STFC(2018) 04

7.2 Council noted the matters arising from the last Council meeting were progressing or covered on the agenda of the current meeting.

8. STFC CORPORATE STRATEGY 2018-2028 REFRESH- STFC(2018) 05

8.1 Throughout the Corporate Strategy refresh exercise Council has received regular progress reports as the priorities have developed in line with guidance from Council, advisory boards, key stakeholders and STFC colleagues. At this meeting Sharon Cosgrove sought further feedback from Council on the latest, near-final iteration of the Corporate Strategy.

8.2 Council commended the work undertaken by the Strategy Team in editing the Strategy document, agreeing it was significantly improved, and more clearly described STFC’s important role in research infrastructures.

8.3 Council approved the draft Corporate Strategy, subject to the final amendments indicated in the meeting paper.

9. IMPACT REPORT 2017- STFC (2018)06

9.1 At the November meeting, Council provided feedback on an earlier draft of the Impact Report 2017 which has now returned in final draft for approval.

9.2 Council noted that this is STFC’s seventh Impact Report which presents examples illustrating the breadth and depth of STFC’s economic and societal impact. The 2017 report focuses on demonstrating how UK productivity is supported by STFC through delivery of the industrial strategy.

9.3 Subject to some very minor corrections identified by Council Members, the Impact Report 2017 was approved for publication. Council expressed support for the plan to send key stakeholders a copy of the report with a short covering letter, noting that it would in effect be STFC’s legacy from its time as a chartered organisation.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (continued)

10. HARWELL CAMPUS STRATEGY – STFC(2018)07
10.1 The Harwell Joint Venture Partnership has been developing the Harwell Campus Strategy over a period of approximately six months. The Campus Strategy has benefited from a comprehensive consultation exercise, drawing in key stakeholders and partners through a series of workshops and individual meetings.

10.2 The strategy showcases the partners’ ambition to develop the Harwell Campus into a world renowned location for innovation, high technology industry and research, which Council noted is completely consistent with STFC’s own Corporate Strategy. Tim Bestwick reported that copies of the document have been sent to both BEIS and UKRI, to date there has been no formal feedback. A launch event has been planned for mid-February.

10.3 Council discussed the strategy document and agreed it could prove a useful tool in discussions with the LEP and other local authorities on issues like transport and housing in the area surrounding the campus. However there was concern from some members that it could be viewed in a similar light to private finance initiatives (PFI) which had fallen out of favour in recent times. Tim Bestwick offered assurance that the funding mechanism for the JV partnership was completely different from that of a PFI as what is proposed would not have happened without the JV partnership.

10.4 Council noted the development of the strategy and the direction of travel now proposed.

11. STFC RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF DIAMOND REVIEW 2015
STFC (2018) 08

11.1 Sharon Cosgrove reminded Council that in 2015 a review of the governance and operation of the Diamond Light Source (DLS) Synchrotron was published. The review examined (i) whether there was a continued scientific need for the facility (ii) whether the existing governance arrangements were adequate, or whether an alternative model would be more effective (iii) whether there were opportunities to improve operational efficiencies and work more collaboratively with other research facilities.

11.2 In May 2017 a working group was convened to ensure STFC’s response to the review recommendations was implemented. Membership of the working group comprised colleagues from STFC, Diamond and ISIS. Details of the ownership and progress on actions arising from the recommendations can be found in Annex 2 of the meeting paper.

11.3 Council discussed the review and its outcome, agreeing that the working relationship with Diamond had improved in recent years, and endorsed the work of the group in ensuring STFC’s response to the recommendations of the review were implemented.

12. STFC AND DIAMOND RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF NATIONAL LARGE FACILITIES- STFC(2018) 09

12.1 This review, led by Dick Elsy, reported to BEIS in April 2017 and was
released to a wider audience in October 2017. STFC and Diamond have worked closely together to consider the recommendations and develop a joint draft response to UKRI and BEIS.

12.2 Council discussed the review and STFC/Diamond’s joint response and agreed the final text to be submitted to BEIS and UKRI. Details can be found in the meeting paper. Brian Bowsher will send the joint response to BEIS/UKRI, copying in Dick Elsy with sincere thanks to him and the review team for their work in producing this very useful and welcome review.

13. UKRI UPDATE-VERBAL

13.1 Ian Kenyon’s (UKRI CFO) management team is beginning to take shape, with the appointment of the Finance and Commercial (Ruth Elliot) and Operations Directors (Anne Dixon). Ian Kenyon is attending the Swindon Staff Forum on 24 January, in addition to this Harwell is hosting the UKRI Board workshop on 29/30 January. The Board will have the opportunity to view many of the facilities, including ISIS and Diamond.

13.2 Council discussed staff morale as transition to UKRI got closer. Science delivery staff and those in administrative roles in the labs were generally less concerned as they felt UKRI would have less direct impact on their work, at least in the short term. Staff in central functions and based at Swindon were generally more concerned and Council agreed this should be addressed by UKRI. As the CFO’s team begins to take shape, timing and effectiveness of communications from UKRI will improve, which should provide greater clarity to staff overall.

14. COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS

14.1 Science Board – STFC(2018)10
Council received a presentation highlighting recent discoveries of massive stars and early galaxies. The most recent Science Board meeting took place on 18 and 19 December at RAL. Highlights were as follows:

i. The Chairs of the Nuclear Physics Advisory Panel NPAP) and the Particle Physics Advisory Panel (PPAP) attended the meeting as part of Science Board’s ongoing series of meetings with Chairs of the Advisory Panels. Both communities were concerned about the impact of funding CDTs on traditional studentships. The formation of UKRI and its potential impact on STFC science, particularly particle physics research was also a concern. Both panels felt it was critical to ensure the government was aware of the important role frontier science had to play in helping industry by developing the skills pipeline.

ii. A strategic review of Radio Astronomy had been conducted following a recommendation from the 2016 Balance of Programmes exercise. The review panel concluded that in order to maximise the science impact of SKA, the UK needed to maintain its strong position through continued high levels of science leadership. The panel also recommended that STFC should plan support for an SKA
regional data centre.

iii. Science Board endorsed the view of the Projects Peer Review Panel (PPRP) that appropriate support should be made available for the ATLAS Upgrade Phase II (along with CMS Upgrade) and made recommendation to the STFC Executive concerning funding. After being considered by the STFC Executive, Finance Committee will review the ATLAS/CMS upgrade which will then come to Council at the March meeting.

iv. Science Board considered seven Statements of Interest (SOI), including four from Nuclear Physics which will be considered by PPRP after a full programme evaluation. Sean Freeman highlighted how Science Board’s deliberations around these SOIs illustrated that many projects had been stopped, and many very good projects are not taken forward, and many proposals were just not made at all as successive years of flat cash funding had taken its toll.

15.3 Finance Committee-verbal
Gerard Connell provided Council with a brief update on matters discussed at the most recent Finance Committee meeting (Jan 2018). Finance Committee continued to monitor both the CERN Pension repayment plan and the Hartree Project and would be receiving further updates at their next meeting.

15.4 Innovation Advisory Board
Council noted the content of this paper which was tabled at the meeting.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

17. FACILITY BOARD REPORTS

i. CLF Facility Board-STFC(2018)11
Council noted the content of the CLF Facility Board report and agreed to send any comments or questions to Andrew Taylor.

ii. ISIS Facility Board- STFC(2018)12
Council noted the content of the ISIS Facility Board report and agreed to send any comments or questions to Andrew Taylor.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18.1 No other business was raised.

18.2 The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting and reminded them that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 20th March 2018 at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory. There will be a dinner held at a local venue following the meeting to celebrate the last Council meeting for STFC in its current form.